

Appl. No. 09/825,609
Amtd. dated September 30, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 30, 2003

AMENDMENTS

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 5, please replace the paragraph beginning on line 24 with the following paragraph:

FIGS. 2-4 illustrate one preferred embodiment of an absorbent insert 20 that may be used in an absorbent system according to the present invention. FIG. 2 illustrates the top view of the body-facing outer surface 31 of the insert 20, while FIG. 3 illustrates the garment-facing outer surface 35 of the insert 20. When not in use, the insert 20 may be laid flat in a plane, as shown. Preferably, the insert 20 has an elongated and generally hour-glass shape or I-shape, which may be dimensioned and configured for a particular absorbent garment. The insert 20 is elongated in a longitudinal direction defined by length L_1 , and has three integral portions along its length, including a central portion 24, connected at either side with end portions 22, 26, respectively. The insert 20 also has a lateral direction defined by one or more widths, W_1 , W_1' , W_2 , W_2' , W_3 , and W_4 [[, W_5 , and W_5']]. In the preferred embodiment, the central portion 24 has a width W_1 , while the end portions 22, 26 have a width W_1' which is larger than W_1 . The widening of the end portions 22, 26 results in an insert having the hour-glass shape, which fits better to the contours of the body and may fit better with a particular absorbent garment. In alternate embodiments, the inserts of the present invention may have a consistent lateral width across the entire longitudinal direction. By way of example only, a typical adult incontinence insert will have an L_1 of about 20 cm to about 40 cm, a W_1 of about 7 cm to about 10.5 cm, and a W_1' of about 7.5 cm to about 14 cm. The insert typically will have a total thickness of about 2 mm to about 40 mm, and more preferably about 8 to 15 mm. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the insert is dimensioned and configured for the particular user and the particular outer absorbent garment, and therefore, for example, an insert for a child's diaper will have significantly smaller dimensions.

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On page 14, please replace the paragraph beginning on line 14 with the following amended paragraph:

While the invention has been described in conjunction with several specific embodiments, it is to be understood that many alternatives, modifications and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art in light of the foregoing description. For example, the body-facing outer surface and the garment-facing outer surface have been shown as being part of the cover layers; however, the cover layers, as well as the intake or surge layer, are optional layers which need not be included in the insert. Rather, the absorbent layer itself, particularly, the covering material 43[[, 53,]] and the wrapping material of layer 50, may serve as the outer surfaces, or the delay layer may serve as an outer surface. Furthermore, while the delay layer has been shown as being between the second absorbent layer and the garment-facing outer surface, the delay layer may also be more than one delay layer. In another example, while the attachment portion has been shown as an adhesive zone, other mechanisms of attachment, such as mechanical fasteners, may also be used. Alternately, the insert may simply rest in the absorbent garment by way of friction, without any attachment mechanism. Accordingly, this invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications and variations that fall within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.